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ABSTRACT

A survey of employers showed that high school grade point average had the strongest positive influence in the hiring of young people for entry-level jobs. Eight hundred and fifty employers in three fields (clerical, retailing, and machine trades) were asked to rate application forms of fictitious job seekers for specific positions. Other factors that these employers rated highly were the following: (1) high school diploma, (2) part-time or full-time work experience, (3) work experience in large organizations, (4) relevant work experience, (5) participation in cooperative or occupational work experience programs, (6) participation in machine trades vocational education programs for machine trades positions, and (7) attendance at a postsecondary school. A high number of prior job terminations due to quitting or being fired earned a negative rating from employers. Ratings were also influenced by the personal characteristics of the rater and characteristics of the particular job and firm. The study concluded that school administrators should be aware of the importance that employers place on good grades and good attitudes and should encourage students to work for academic honors in order to help them enter the work world. (KC)

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Education & Employment

Research for the Practitioner

How Employers Rate Youthful Job Applicants

Research Findings

What do employers look for when hiring young people for entry-level jobs? High school grade point average had the strongest positive influence according to 850 employers surveyed by the National Center for Research in Vocational Education. Employers in three fields (clerical, retailing, and machine trades) were asked to rate application forms of fictitious job seekers for specific positions.

Other factors that contributed to a high rating were these:

- High school diploma
- Part-time or full-time work experience
- Work experience in large organizations
- Relevant work experience
- Participation in cooperative or occupational work experience programs, particularly in distributive education for retailing applicants
- Participation in machine trades vocational education program for machine trades positions
- Attendance at a postsecondary school, especially if a certificate or degree was obtained and the program was relevant to the job

A high number of prior job terminations due to quitting or being fired earned a negative rating.

Ratings were also influenced by the personal characteristics of the rater and characteristics of the particular job and firm. When asked about the employment experience of young workers hired 2 years previously, employers said those promoted had a higher level of education, higher grades, and prior relevant work experience.

Implications

School administrators should be aware that employers weight grades most heavily when making hiring decisions. Schools should have a system of awards and schoolwide recognition for academic accomplishments similar to the system that recognizes athletic achievement. Teachers can use cooperative learning strategies in classrooms, where students work in teams. Team effort encourages students to teach each other and to share knowledge in a cooperative rather than a competitive setting. It also provides greater opportunities for student recognition.

Teachers and counselors should also be aware of the importance that employers place on good work values and attitudes: job seeking and job advancing skills; and some knowledge of the world of work. Teachers can explain educational and occupational options open to students and help them explore their work values through classroom instruction including student planning and time management activities. Counselors can help students prepare resumes and job search portfolios demonstrating their accomplishments to take with them in applying for jobs.

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Additional Information

The executive summary and final technical report are available from ERIC as ED245115 and ED245116, respectively. Written by Kevin Hollenbeck and Bruce Smith, both are titled "Selecting Young Workers: The Influence of Applicants' Education and Skills on Employability Assessment by Employers."

A brochure giving the results of the study (Research You Can Use, No. 1) is available at no charge. A 6-page summary was published in the summer 1984 (vol. 2, no. 7) issue of *Facts & Findings*, a calendar subscription research series. To request the brochure or ordering information for *Facts & Findings*, contact the National Center's Program Information Office toll free at 800-848-4815 or 614-486-3655 (in Ohio and outside the continental U.S.). Cable: CTVOCEDOSU/ Columbus, Ohio. Telex: 8104821894.

This is the second of a series of eight "research briefs" highlighting findings of studies on education and employment conducted by the National Center and sponsored by the National Institute of Education. The summary was prepared by Ruth Gordon of the Resource and Referral Service.

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Classroom materials based on this research will be available in 1986. Contact the National Center's Program Information Office for availability of unique new materials in THE EMPLOYER'S CHOICE series, a package for teaching students successful techniques for getting and keeping jobs.

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